

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Scientific life of Szeged in eight volumes

By launching the book series labelled *Compendium of Knowledge by the University of Szeged*, the editors embarked on a task with no historical antecedents and contemporary examples. In nearly two and a half thousand pages the completed eight volumes recall the images of the past of the University of Szeged, the intellectual heritage of its Nobel Prize laureate scientist: Albert Szent-Györgyi, the richness of the University's present, the quality of its current research activities and the University's international prospects. This enterprise complements the topic of a second set of publications. These publications, issued by the Publishing Department at the University of Szeged, look at the history of Szeged's higher education institution and its predecessors. The first volume, which explores the period between 1581 and 1872, was published in 2011 while efforts are currently made, under the guidance of the Committee on the History of the University, to issue the second volume in the series regarding the subject of.

The eight volumes in the *Compendium of Knowledge by the University of Szeged* follow the same editorial principles and have balanced length and similar typographical features. In line with the chronological order of the internal content, the volume numbering does not follow this order, the *illustrated book* is about historic space. It is about the buildings, and Szeged, the two towns where the *alma mater studiorum* has been operating for the past four hundred and thirty-three years linked with thousands of threads to the attributes of the geographical place and other institutions operating there. This illustrated book shows a lot of other things as well: famous professors, laboratories, libraries and diverse life situations. The Hungarian and English captions attached to the photos present only what is absolutely necessary.

In the 1920s and 1930s there was a real golden age in the life of the university in Szeged. Due to the supportive political environment, thanks primarily to Kunó Klebelsberg, and the level of work carried out here, all the scientific and artistic activities that took place on the banks of the river *Tisza* had received international attention. All that culminated in the work of Albert Szent-Györgyi. *Three volumes* are dedicated to him in the *Compendium of Knowledge by the University of Szeged* series. These volumes are all about *Albert Szent-Györgyi*. By publishing one by one those articles that are about Szent-Györgyi and appeared in the daily newspapers the *Délmagyarország* and the *New York Times*, we assume the role of a bridge that aims towards

top professionals and the world. While Szent-Györgyi's forward pointing significance in time and space that he achieved here is stressed by an all-round analysis of Szent-Györgyi's hardly known or unknown dimensions of operation that is far beyond biology and medical sciences. That is why, in the fall of 2012 at the 75th anniversary of the awarding of the Nobel Prize, we organized our free university series, the material of which is now printed here in Hungarian and English. In this way, the diplomat, the sportsman and the philosopher-poet all stand in front of us, a person who had contributed with his research to the development of our knowledge in the field of laser physics as well. So much so that as Gábor Szabó physicist, academician and the Rector of the University of Szeged has demonstrated in his study: the research carried out in this area by Szent-Györgyi should be rightly regarded as the scientific foundation for the big construction investment that is currently under way: the Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI) ELI-ALPS Laser Research Centre.

Four volumes, half of the whole enterprise that is the *Compendium of Knowledge by the University of Szeged*, describe the present: *the ongoing scientific activities at the University of Szeged*. The common feature of these four volumes is the promotional aim: the directions of research and results presented here may well be understood without specific professional prior knowledge and provide very useful information in a variety of areas. In addition to the will of the editors and authors, the above-mentioned fact was a requirement for the TÁMOP dissemination tender that provided the financial background for this enterprise. In general, the international scientific world recognizes five major disciplines. Out of these five, the University of Szeged runs PhD training programmes in four in a total of nineteen schools. In order to give a more authentic presentation of the scientific research and its results, we relied on the heads of the doctoral schools and their most respected scientists. This is how the content of the four discipline-focused volumes was assembled.

Apart from the basic similarities, the various parts of the discipline-focused volumes in the *Compendium of Knowledge by the University of Szeged* were constructed using different editorial principles and methods. In the book of *life sciences*, the professors themselves provide an overview of the research topics available in their institutes and the main areas of their work. In the books of *physical sciences*, *humanities and social sciences*, the authors have approached the presentation task from a different aspect. In these sections, we can read studies that discuss, in a general way, timely issues that represent the topics of the university and formulate, in a popular manner, but satisfying the highest academic levels, those questions and answers that are most interesting for today's public. As editors, we do not think that via

the picture we present here on the work of the researchers at the University of Szeged, we are able to provide space for every important endeavour and achievement, nor do we think that there could not have been a more credible image on their professional realities. We ask the reader to look at what is included in the book and not what is missing due to reasons of size restrictions and selection criteria. We wanted to present content on the verge of what is no longer and what is to come with respect to the forerunners and looking forward to the successors.

*Editors of the Compendium of Knowledge
by the University of Szeged*